

2. *Agrarian Policy Under the Soviets (1917-1945)*

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The gulf dividing the peasants from their erstwhile comrades-in-arms was aptly symbolized by the law on nationalization of the land (February 19, 1918), decreeing that all land was the property of the State and was to be used only by those willing to till it. Though the law itself remained for a long time only a paper document, it presaged future conflicts. The Bolshevik experiments with collective forms of agriculture were another ominous sign for the future, although the early collectives, chiefly composed of landless peasants and romantic urban intellectuals, constituted no threat to the established rural order.¹⁶ Indeed, in the first decade of the Revolution there were no suggestions of the full-scale onslaught of collectivization that was to come, and no talk of a "collectivization drive." Lenin's frequently repeated warnings against coercion of the middle peasants (*srednyaki*) were taken to reflect settled policy. "You cannot create anything here by coercion," he said, and added:

Even in Europe, where [the middle peasantry] nowhere achieves such strength, where technology and culture, city life and railroads are tremendously developed, and where it would be easiest of all to think of such a thing, nobody, not even the most revolutionary of Socialists, has ever proposed adopting measures of coercion towards the middle peasantry.¹⁷

But events themselves were to force a harsher policy and the revolutionary alliance was soon cracked wide open. Heavy strains

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¹⁷ Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 178-79.

000 the battle map. Data from each country then laid the supreme command in Moscow to establish an over-all strategy.

Different groups of people are the main object of study. The least important is the propertied class which was dispossessed by the nationalization of factories and mines and by the agricultural reform. Their number is insignificant; their way of thinking amusingly old-fashioned. They are no problem. In time they will die off—if need be, with a little help.

The petty bourgeoisie, that is the small merchants and craftsmen, cannot be taken so lightly. They constitute a powerful force, one that is deeply rooted in the masses. Hardly is one clandestine workshop or store liquidated in one neighborhood or city than another springs up elsewhere. Restaurants hide behind a sliding wall of a private house; shoemakers and tailors work at home for their friends. In fact, everything that comes under the heading of speculation sprouts up again and again. And no won-

[444] der! State and municipal stores consistently lack even the

565 barest essentials. In the summer, one can buy winter
432 clothes; in the winter, summer wear—but usually of the

wrong size and of poor quality. The purchase of a spool of thread or a needle is a major problem, for the one state store in the town may not carry them for a year. Clothes that are given to be mended are held by the local crafts' cooperative for six months. The inns ("Points of Collective Nourishment") are so crowded that people lose the desire to drink with their friends. They know they will have to sit down at a table with strangers and wait, sometimes as long as an hour, before the waiter appears.

All this creates a field for private services. A worker's wife goes to a nearby town, buys needles and thread, brings them back and sells them: the germ of capitalism.

★ [By men in the capitals of Central & East Europe -- Analyst]

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The worker himself of a free afternoon mends a broken bathroom pipe for a friend who has waited months for the state to send him a repair man. In return, he gets a little money, enough to buy himself a shirt: a rebirth of capitalism. He hasn't time to wait in line on the day that the state store receives a new shipment of goods, so he buys his shirt from a friend. She has cleverly managed to buy three, let us say, through her friendship with the salesgirl and now she resells them at a small profit. She is speculating. What she earns as a cleaning-woman in a state factory is not enough to support her three children since her husband was arrested by the security police. If these manifestations of human enterprise were not wiped out it is easy to guess what they would lead to. A worker would set up a plumbing repairs shop. His neighbor, who secretly sells alcohol to people who want to drink in relative privacy, would open a café. The cleaning-woman would become a merchant, peddling her goods. They would gradually expand their businesses, and the lower middle class would reappear. Introduce freedom of the press and of assembly, and publications catering to this clientele would spring up like mushrooms after the rain. And there would be the petty bourgeoisie as a political force.

What is worse, this matter involves the peasant problem. Peasants, who make up the majority of the population of the country, have a middle-class mentality. They are more deeply attached to their few little hectares of field than the storekeepers are to their little shops. As late as the nineteenth century they were still living in bondage. They oppose collectivization because they see it as a return to a state their fathers found unbearable. To leap out of bed at the signal of an official on a collective farm is just as hateful as to do so at the sound of a gong rung by the overseer of an estate. The peasants' blind hatred worries the

- 565 Party. Its more sensitive members secretly bow to the necessity of making concessions. They believe that collectivization should be preceded by cooperative use of machinery on private fields, and that it can come only after a long introductory phase of education, extending possibly over decades. This temporizing spirit breeds trouble; that is why the whispered slogans of the "national Communists" are always so popular. But the Center exacts a certain tempo. The structure of every dependent country must be brought to resemble that of Russia as quickly as possible.

This problem, in turn, affects the cities. Peasants are divided into three categories—"poor," "middle," and "kulak"—in an effort to break their solidarity by engendering mutual antagonisms. A peasant's wealth is rated not only by the amount of land he holds, but by how many horses, cows, and pigs he owns, how he lives, eats, and dresses. Lest he fall into an uncomfortable classification, he drops farming and flees to the city; or else he keeps only a minimum amount of livestock and pretends to be poor. As a result, the city suffers from a lack of provisions.

[471] But the peasants are not dangerous. They may beat up a Party boss or even kill him in a burst of desperation, but nothing more. When the state is the sole buyer of their produce, and when they cannot voice their protest at the amount of tribute the state demands of them, they are powerless. The security police can easily handle recalcitrants, especially since it can complain of no lack of informers, now that informing has become an excellent means of saving oneself. The peasants are a leaderless mass. History shows few instances when they seriously threatened the rulers. The term "peasant revolt" sounds nice in textbooks and has a certain propaganda value, but only for the naïve. In reality, the peasants have almost al-

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ways served as a tool; their leaders, most often of non-peasant origin have used them for their own ends. The power of the peasants lies in their number; it is a power only when a man like Lenin comes along and throws the weight of their numbers into the scale of events. Obviously, peasants can cause trouble in such moments of upheaval as wars. As long as a private peasant economy exists it acts as a natural base for partisan operations. A peasant hut is the ideal place for partisans to eat, sleep, and work out plans of action. Therefore, a collective farm, where a man's every step is easy to trace, guarantees a degree of control that is indispensable if one wants to preclude hostile underground activity.

Workers are far more important than peasants. Most of them are antagonistic to the new system. That is understandable. They resent the norms they must fill. Those norms are constantly rising. Though the "solidarity of the workers" makes a fine slogan, it does not mean that the solidarity of the crews in a factory is to be tolerated. Their ranks are split by the institution of "shock-workers" which is fostered by an appeal to ambition and enforced by pressure from members of the Party cell. A man may at first refuse to become a shock-worker. But gradually he learns it does not pay to be stubborn; because when workers are being chosen for a course in bookkeeping, for instance, his application is rejected, or when his turn comes for a free vacation he is declared ineligible, etc.

The attitude of the workers toward the regime is ambivalent. On the one hand, they prize its positive contributions. Unemployment is a thing of the past; in fact, there is a constant lack of skilled labor. Not only the head of a family but most of its members are employed. This accumulation of wages means that a family would be able to live better than ever before if only the stores were fairly

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well stocked; but given the shortage of food and consumer goods, this is rarely, if ever, the case. For workers' children, social advancement is easy because the Party must recruit the cadres of the new intelligentsia from their ranks. The worker can educate himself by attending countless evening courses. If he stands in good favor with the Party he can enjoy a vacation in a rest home, all expenses paid. On the other hand, he cannot defend himself against exploitation by his employer, the state. His trade union representatives are Party tools. They team together with the factory managers for one purpose: to raise production. Workers are told that a strike is a crime. Against whom are they to strike? Against themselves? After all, the means of production belong to them, the state belongs to them. But such an explanation is not very convincing. The workers, who dare not state aloud what they want, know that the goals of the state are far from identical with their own.

Central and Eastern Europe produce in order to raise the military and economic potential of the Center¹ and to compensate for the industrial backwardness of Russia. Workers and their needs have no influence on production plans. Most of the goods produced ebb away to the East. Besides, every product of a worker's hands is the object of innumerable bookkeeping operations. A whole staff of functionaries sits in every factory, counting, writing reports, compiling statistics; the same thing happens on every rung of the state hierarchy, right through to the state wholesale houses and retail stores. If, at last, the article reaches the consumer, it is very expensive; into its cost are counted the salaries of the swarms of bureaucrats through whose hands it must pass. Factory machines are over-aged; there is a scarcity of essential spare parts. So workers are ordered to replace broken parts by whatever ¹[Moscow -- Analyst]

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homemade means they can devise. Production comes first, 565 •
even at the price of using up the machines. Discipline is 466
severe; negligence or even a few minutes' lateness are
strictly punished. No wonder, then, that the bad side of
the system outweighs the good in the worker's mind. Still,
he dares not complain. If he betrays any signs of discontent
the security police, whose secret agents are his co-
workers and sometimes his friends, takes care of him.

The wildcat strikes that break out from time to time 565
are no threat in themselves, for peace returns quickly 468
after mass arrests of all participants. They are, however,
ominous signs that discontentment has reached a tension
that can find release only in desperate acts. A strike re-
quires a certain minimum of organization. That is why
nothing else makes Party dialecticians so uneasy. The
workers are the only class capable of organized action—
that Marxist principle has never been forgotten. No ac-
tion, however, is possible without leaders. If the leaders
reason correctly, that is, if they understand the necessities
of the historic process, then the workers as a mass will be
unable to protest.

Everything, thus, takes us back to the question of mas- 626
tery over the mind. Every possible opportunity for educa- 535
tion and advancement is offered to the more energetic and
active individuals among the workers. The new, incredi-
bly extensive bureaucracy is recruited from among the
young people of working-class origin. The road before
them is open, open but guarded: their thinking must be
based on the firm principles of dialectical materialism.
Schools, theaters, films, painting, literature, and the press
all shape their thinking.

We should also call attention to a new institution, the 575
"club," whose significance is comparable to that of the 626
chapel in the middle ages. It exists in every factory, ev-

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¹⁷ Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 178-79.

were generated by the agricultural crisis and the ensuing famine ⁴⁷¹ of 1920-21. To meet the needs of the urban population, the ⁵⁶⁵ ● Bolsheviks decreed a forced food levy (December 14, 1920) by which peasants were ordered to deliver their entire surplus to the State. The peasants, retaliating in kind, produced little more than their own needs demanded. Scattered peasant uprisings, together ^[269] with the Kronstadt rebellion early in 1921, combined to force a change of policy on the new regime. The strict codes of "War Communism" were abrogated and the New Economic Policy (NEP) was launched. Delivery quotas were introduced (amounting to a tax-in-kind) and peasants were encouraged to produce for a flourishing free market.

Thus, for a time under NEP the peasants, who now controlled almost all the arable land, were permitted to enjoy the fruits of their revolutionary exertions. Agricultural production recovered rapidly and a degree of national prosperity resulted. But the Bolsheviks had paid a price for this prosperity — the restoration of free market relations between town and country.

THE LENINIST DILEMMA

The unstable compromise of NEP postponed the inevitable ⁵⁷⁸ clash between the "proletarian dictatorship" and the victorious ¹⁸⁵ peasant revolution. Two parallel developments were rapidly to hasten the impending struggle: throughout the NEP period (1921-28) the peasants tightened their hold on the land, many of them growing relatively prosperous, and thereby fortifying their gains. At the same time the Bolsheviks were tightening their hold on the political machinery of the State and turning their party into a monolithic organization capable of an outright offensive against the rest of the country. Thus, the stage was set for the gigantic economic struggle of the late twenties.

The issue at stake between the Bolsheviks and the peasantry was only partly ideological. The conflict between the Bolshevik belief in the superior efficacy of large-scale "socialist" farming and the peasants' allegiance to his traditional "way of life" was important, but this conflict was subordinated to another one which was economic in character. The peasants and the Bolshevik regime faced each other across the table on which the grain produce of Russia was negotiated. And it was, in fact, in the realm of economics

665 and customs they knew, and of which they were usually natives.³ As subsequent events were to show, the transplantation of the Soviet system to Eastern Europe proved to be far more complicated than these former Cominternists had perhaps anticipated. Local conditions and traditions of the captive countries were everywhere to balk them, demanding improvisations and flexibilities for which they were unprepared.

The story of land collectivization in the Satellites from 1945 to 1953 is consequently the story of the interaction between a highly developed system of agrarian exploitation torn from its Soviet context, and the indigenous conditions of Eastern Europe which confronted Party political-economic planners at every turn. A brief review of these conditions is in order.

2. *The Rise of the Peasant Proprietor (1800-1939)*

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423 Although some remnants of an essentially feudal land system survived in areas of Poland and Hungary (particularly the latter) until the eve of World War II, the major features of East European feudalism, contrary to popular belief, died before the beginning of the 20th century.⁴ Serfdom was finally abolished by parliamentary legislation or revolutionary action by 1860: in the Austrian "hereditary lands" (including Slovenia, Bohemia and Moravia) as early as 1781; in Croatia in 1848; in Hungary (including Slovakia) in 1849; in Congress Poland in 1861; and in Romania in 1864. Emancipation of the Serbian and Bulgarian peasantry resulted from progressive limitations of the political power of their Turkish overlords, a process which took place throughout the 19th century.

As was the case in Russia, however, emancipation did not solve the basic problems of East European rural society. Indeed, with the growing incorporation of Eastern Europe into the world agricultural market, the problems grew even more severe in the 19th century. Except in Bulgaria and Serbia, where a class of peasant smallholders emerged within the framework of Ottoman society, the abolition of serfdom did not establish a sturdy, independent peasantry such as existed in the West. Even in Bulgaria

³ "The East European revolution . . . was imposed from outside and from above . . . [and therefore cannot] justly be compared with the revolutions of 1688, 1789, and 1917." (Seton-Watson, p. vii.).

⁴ It is necessary, one writer points out, to stress the incorrectness of the widely-held view that "the feudal system, with the characteristic features of the large latifundia, continued to prevail east of the Elbe until the arrival of the Soviet Army." (Ygael Gluckstein, *Stalin's Satellites in Europe*, London, 1952, p. 13).

565 and Serbia the peasants, though not oppressed, were extremely
423 poor. The peasant was no longer tied to the land, but in a great
many cases his emancipation meant only that he worked for the
same landlord to whom he was once bound. Furthermore, glaring
inequalities in the pattern of land ownership developed after
emancipation. (Chart IV indicates the inequalities of land distrib-
ution surviving the post-World War I reforms).

The root of the problem lay in the fact that emancipation did
not lead to a basic improvement in the technological level of farm-
ing (with the possible exception of Bohemia) so that with the late
19th century increase in population, the struggle among the peas-
ants was for more land, not for improved technique.⁶ In Western
Europe the emancipation of the peasantry had been accompanied
by the slow certain growth of commerce and industry, but in
Eastern Europe no urban society developed to compensate for, and
offset, the agrarian dislocations. The rising competition of American
grain on the world market further contributed to steady deteriora-
tion of the agrarian situation.

565 In the years prior to World War I there developed — both
423 among city intellectuals and peasantry — a growing consciousness
of the need for profound reform of the land system. Groups were
created to discuss the problems but little concretely was done
before the war. The great peasant revolt which shook Romania in
1907, though rapidly suppressed, climaxed this pre-war drive for
basic economic change.⁷

World War I, a social as well as a military convulsion, gave
the first real impetus to the drive for reform. Stimulated by the
success of the peasant revolution in Russia and by local nationalist
ferment, the East European peasants organized the first political
parties to promulgate demands in the name of the peasants as a
distinct class. Their immediate demand was for sweeping land
reforms, and their long-range hope was a share in the rule of their
countries. "The peasants," in the words of one historian, "were
roused and seemingly had learnt that land without liberty, or liberty
without land, would be but a half freedom, and that to gain control
of power was necessary." In Bulgaria the Agrarian Party, under

⁶ The increase in population density in Eastern Europe in recent years is re-
flected in the fact that, for example, the average Bulgarian farm occupied
7.3 hectares in 1897, and only 4.5 hectares in 1946. Sharp reductions in land
per peasant occurred in each of the East European countries.

⁷ See Henry Roberts, *Rumania* (New York, 1949), p. 11-21.

⁸ David Mitrany, *Marx Against the Peasant* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1951),
p. 121.

the leadership of the radical Alexander Stambouliski, took power⁶⁶⁹ after the war. Though his regime was overthrown by the reaction-⁵⁶⁵ ary Tsankov-Volkov *coup* of 1923, with every excess and barbarity,⁴²³ Stambouliski's premiership left a lasting social imprint. Elsewhere in Eastern Europe peasant parties were not strong enough to take the reigns of government, but the impact of the "green rising" was reflected everywhere in legislative activity.

In Romania about 50 per cent of the arable land (four million⁴²³ hectares) was transferred to peasant smallholders, reflecting the vigor of the 1907 uprising. In newly-created Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia the reforms were less spectacular, but followed the same area-wide pattern. In these two countries the land reforms had a national as well as social character, the majority of the expropriated lands having been Hungarian and German properties.*

The same forces were at work in Poland where the issue of land reform was uppermost in the public consciousness at the time of the nation's reestablishment. Despite determined opposition from the land owning classes, limited land reforms were decreed in 1919 and 1920. But partly because the principle of total compensation was accepted, only two and a half million hectares were distributed among the peasants by 1938, only enough to satisfy the land hunger of approximately half the natural increase in population.*

In the entire region only Hungary resisted peasant demands for land reform. There the movement was effectively blocked, first by Bela Kun's temporary Communist dictatorship, and then by the Horthy reaction. The land structure that emerged from the post-war reforms is described in Chart IV.

As Chart IV indicates, the post-World War I reforms left much to be accomplished in the direction of equalizing the peasant land tenure. But from the Baltic to the Aegean the reforms signified

* In Czechoslovakia 12 per cent of the arable land, or 1.7 million hectares, was distributed under the reform; in Yugoslavia 12.5 per cent of the arable land, or 1.8 million hectares, was distributed. The Yugoslav reforms were largely confined to Croatia and Slovenia, former provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

* Ferdynand Zweig, *Poland Between the Wars* (London, 1944), p. 130. Zweig's analysis of the national discussion of reform in the early 1920s is interesting, partly because so many of the arguments employed by those who opposed breaking up the large estates are those which are today used to justify the modern *kolkhozi*. This is true particularly of the argument that "self-sufficient small holdings are supposed to be unsuitable for compulsory deliveries in war-time." (p. 134).

Satellite industrial program. The outstanding case in point is, of course, Hungary, whose extremely poor harvest of 1952 provided the impetus which paved the way for the crisis of 1953.¹⁹ 423
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2. The reliance upon slow economic strangulation rather than direct administrative force in collectivization inevitably meant greater reliance on the voluntary will of the peasantry than was necessary in the Soviet collectivization drive. Therefore, the regimes had to take some account of the individual tastes of the peasantry. The variety of intermediate types of collective, the special privileges granted kolkhoz members, reflect the Communist desire to soften the impact of collectivization.²⁰ The strenuous efforts made to demonstrate to the peasant the economic superiority of collectivism were also part of this effort.

This policy made collectivization possible but at the same time detracted from the very usefulness originally intended for the collectivized farms; that is, the effort to render the collectives attractive to the independent peasant (limited as they were) did not facilitate exploitation of the peasants which was their major economic justification. As was evident from the analysis presented in Chapted IV, the degree of exploitation of the "Socialist sector" was not much greater than the exploitation of the private sector. The difference was, in any case, smaller than that achieved in the Soviet Union, where a prolonged period of persuasion and intra-peasantry discrimination had been unnecessary.

4. *The East European Peasant*

Peasant resistance is a social force extremely difficult to measure either quantitatively or qualitatively. It expresses itself in many forms and guises, both in open revolt and passive resistance. This is partly because peasant sentiment rarely expresses itself in organizational form but more commonly in individual economic acts. In modern history, governments have found it difficult to elicit fanatical loyalty from the peasant; at best he is obedient. For the same reasons, the peasant has rarely been drawn into the organized revolutionary movements of the time. He has succumbed to few 565
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¹⁹ There was, of course, other factors involved in the Hungarian agricultural crisis of 1953 (see above pp. 109-10).

²⁰ Mention should be made here of Communist efforts throughout the sphere to flatter the peasant by a superficial glorification of his traditional dance, costumes, handiwork, and other expressions of the peasant culture which once graced the covers of pre-World War II East European tourist guides.

- 565 of the sophisticated slogans of modern politics and tends to judge
829 governments in terms of provincial and pragmatic considerations
668 which cannot be encompassed in the romantic slogans of either
the State or the Revolution. For a fleeting moment in 1917, the
peasants of Russia involved themselves in the maelstrom of a pro-
letarian revolution. Between the wars they gave occasional support
to genuinely peasant parties, but invariably their interest lagged
or the parties betrayed them. Otherwise, the peasants have in
general been passive rather than active participants in 20th Century
political history.

The vast uprising of the Russian peasants in 1917-18 was probably their greatest show of strength in the 20th century, and certainly absorbed more peasant energies and resentments than either the 1907 Romanian rebellion or the Bulgarian peasant victories of the early 1920s. But their victory was short-lived, and was achieved at a tremendous price. The cataclysmic forces of the Russian Revolution so shattered the old structure of both countryside and city that the gains the peasant made remained at the mercy of terrible forces. The destruction of traditional institutions which occurred in 1917-21 in defense of the Revolution prepared the land for the collectivization onslaught 10 years later.

The peasants of Eastern Europe have not participated in such a revolution, and their institutions knew no such cataclysmic overturn. Furthermore, East European peasants have had a longer tradition of private property and as a result were less capable of revolutionary opposition to their oppressors but more capable of that type of passive resistance which in the long run is most effective. Russian peasants might destroy the livestock in defiance of the Bolshevik cadres but East European peasants could more easily sabotage the plan by day-to-day non-cooperation. The revolutionary traditions of the Russian peasantry made possible greater heroism, but no greater improvement of their economic situation. The less militant traditions of the East European peasantry (in part the consequence of more humane governments) guaranteed that there would be no repetition of the victories of 1917-18, nor any exact repetition of the terrible defeats of 1929-32.

There are many national factors affecting the total picture: the proximity of peasant victory in Hungary of 1945-46; the power of the Catholic Church in rural Poland; the relative prosperity of the Czech farmers; the communal traditions of the Bulgarian and

Yugoslav peasants; the special position which Romania occupies in the Soviet empire. These differences are important, and explain many of the variations within the framework of agricultural policy. But these variations fall into that historical experience which distinguishes East European peasantry from its Russian counterpart. These historical differences are of the utmost importance in explaining the failure of the East European Communists to emulate successfully the Soviet example.

5. *The Communist Role in Eastern Europe*

The Communist Parties of Eastern Europe consider themselves progressive forces of the area. In agriculture, they assert that by lifting the backward peasantry out of its traditional lethargy and provincialism, they are performing a service for the peasants and the entire society. The opposition of the peasantry to Communist plans for the rationalization of the land stems from stubborn allegiance to outmoded customs and habits. Vulko Chervenkov, the Bulgarian Premier, gave the classical formulations on this point:

The Bulgarian peasant has two souls. One is the love of work and the other is the sense of private ownership. His spirit of private ownership brings him close to the capitalist. His spirit of work brings him close to the working class. Therefore the peasant is hesitant. We Communists, through our tactics and by the collective method, should kill their spirit of private ownership and build our socialist world.²¹

It is precisely this conception of the Communist role in Eastern Europe which the material gathered together here calls into question.

No doubt it is partly true that peasant resistance to collectivization is based on their passionate attachment to the land they till and own. But as has been pointed out, the major issue in the struggle between the Communists and the peasants was the question of the *distribution* of the fruits of the land, rather than the more abstract question of conflicting ideologies.

The peasants fight not only to protect their ancient traditions but even more to protect their economic rights, and they frequently employ the ancient traditions in defense of their own economic interests. The Communists, for their part, struggle against these traditions not merely out of doctrinaire antagonism but because these customs stand in the way of further exploitation of the

²¹ *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia) September 9, 1953.

795 Greek Orthodox Church, which though united in its Uniate form with Rome, preserved its old language and customs. This Church became the target of special Russian propagandistic and repressive efforts as soon as the Iron Curtain was established.

● 565 Elsewhere outside the former realm of the Habsburgs the
795 situation was comparable. In Poland a Catholic peasantry
369 whose loyalty was deeply moving lived confidently though
primitively in the light of a mystical faith, while worldliness
and skepticism were prevalent among the upper classes. It was
commonly said there, after World War I, that the most religious
of peoples was governed by the most morally lax of bureau-
crats; and that may well have been the case. Nor could the
coming of industrialism to such mushroom cities as Lodz, so
bitterly lamented by Ladislav Reymont, bring about the im-
mediate solution of any grave social problem. Nevertheless,
as we shall see, there existed in Poland religious elites of ex-
traordinary quality and dedication. In eastern Germany, over-
whelmingly Protestant despite certain vigorous centers of
Catholic activity such as the Ermland in East Prussia and the
border districts west of Poznan (Silesia was a province apart,
its culture having been developed under the Habsburgs), one
could go from the old conservative, rural Church communities
of the landed estates along the Baltic Sea to the liberal atmos-
phere of Saxony, where the social problems inherent in modern
industrial society dominated thought and action. Concerning
the Balkans one need say here only that, though they suffered
from the normal diseases of feudalism, they offered much of
vital and absorbing interest to the student of religious life.

175 These observations will help to explain the situation which
186 followed the First World War. The old Austro-Hungarian Em-
pire was dissolved, and dissident nationalist sentiment, sup-
ported by the will of the victorious Allies, demanded the crea-

465 income groups. This gives an insight into the difference
651 between maximum and minimum incomes, but does not reveal the number of people falling within each group. Incomes of persons or enterprises up to 72,000 zlotys are tax-free (there are many who earn even less than 36,000 zlotys). The rate of tax goes on :

72,000—	80,000 zlotys—	2	per cent income tax	
100,000—	110,000	"— 3.5	"	"
150,000—	170,000	"— 7	"	"
190,000—	210,000	"— 9	"	"
250,000—	300,000	"—13	"	"
500,000—	600,000	"—23	"	"
1,000,000—	1,200,000	"—33	"	"
1,400,000—	1,600,000	"—37	"	"
2,400,000—	3,000,000	"—43	"	"
3,600,000—	4,200,000	"—47	"	"
	over 4,200,000	"—50	"	"

(H. W. Robinson, Chief, Division of Operational Analysis, U.N.R.R.A. European Regional Office, London, *Finance in Poland*, p. 21).

To paraphrase Orwell: all men are equal, but some men are more equal than others!*

465 In Czechoslovakia, as has already been mentioned, it was
511 not uncommon (in 1948) to find factory managers earning 40
565 thousand crowns a month, while two-thirds of the workers in 1948 got less than 2,900 crowns a month gross (i.e. before payment of taxes, dues, etc.). In addition, those earning 40,000 crowns were given the free use of a villa, a car with a chauffeur and other perquisites.

Beneš's bourgeois liberal paper, *Svobodné Slovo*, stated, not unjustifiably, that the bureaucracy were 'living in the style of millionaires . . . enjoy every comfort and luxury, thanks to the villas and limousines which they have been allocated by the authorities and to their high incomes'. These people, the paper continued, are 'propertyless—in form only . . . ' (6th September, 1947). The standard of living of the masses, on the other hand, is very low, as even the official statisticians have to admit. As early as June, 1946, the monthly average wage of an industrial worker was 2,540 while the *food ration alone* of a family of three cost 2,721 crowns. And many earned less than the average of 2,540 crowns! Since June, 1946, the condition of the masses has deteriorated. The correspondent of *Associated Press* in Prague, did not exaggerate when he said on 15 July,

*In Russia the scale of income-tax starts with taxes on less than 1,800 roubles a year and ends with taxes on more than 300,000 roubles. (*Izvestia*, 6th April, 1940).

1948: 'Czechoslovakia today can fairly claim to be the hungriest country in Europe—hungrier than even Austria'. The Viennese Socialist paper *Arbeiter Zeitung* wrote on 23rd June, 1948: 'Travellers who often come from Prague to Vienna report that in the last few weeks, for the first time, they have not taken goods from Prague to Vienna, but on their return from Vienna to Prague'. The paper adds particulars of prices on the black market in Prague. It is possible to cite innumerable facts to the same effect. 465
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There can be no doubt about who suffered from the shortages, which were the result partly, but only partly, of the drought of the winter of 1947-8. The drought fails to explain either the acute shortage of textiles, shoes (in the country of Bata!) and other consumer goods, or the duration of the shortages.

It is clear from official data that the portion of the social product going to the workers is decreasing. In January, 1946, the total product of Czechoslovakian industry was sold for 9.09 milliard crowns; wages and salaries in industry itself came to 2.83 milliard crowns, i.e. 31.6 per cent of the turnover. A year later, in January, 1947, the total sales amounted to 15.66 milliard crowns; wages and salaries came to 4.03 milliard or 25.7 per cent of the turnover. This decline in the portion of wages and salaries was accompanied by an increase in the turnover per hour of work from 50 crowns to 78 crowns, a rise of 56 per cent (*Statistical Bulletin of Czechoslovakia*, published by the State Statistical Office, Prague, July, 1947). If the statistics had included only wages and not salaries as well, the decline would have been even bigger. 465
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The journal *Učelnictví a Kontrola*, issued by the trade union publishing house, *Práce*, submitted the state budget to a detailed analysis in order to get an approximate estimate of the cost of the bureaucracy. This reveals that the travelling expenses of the administration proper—that is, the ministries, not including the administration of the nationalised industries—amounted to not less than 780 million crowns, the maintenance of automobiles to 180 million. How large these amounts are is clear from the fact that the expenditure on travelling of these bureaucrats would cover the difference between the meagre wages of about 300,000 families and a minimum living

465 standard. In summing up, the article states: 'The public
511 administration swallows 48 per cent of the national income.
434 How will it be possible to raise the standard of living of the
656 whole people, how will the wide layers of the toilers be
satisfied, how will it be possible to pay proper salaries to
government clerks?' (From an article, 'Let us think about the
Figures', quoted by V. Salus in the theoretical paper of the
Czech Social Democracy, *Čl*, August 15th, 1947, under the
interesting heading, 'Economic Democracy and the New
Nobility').*

511 The division of the national income in Yugoslavia is not less
● 565 unequal than in the other 'People's Democracies.' Vernon
434 Bartlett, when in Belgrade, described the situation in the

*For a time the Communist Party leaders tried to cushion the conflict between the workers and the 'new nobility' by directing the hostility of the masses exclusively against the bourgeoisie. For example in October, 1947, in connection with the relief to the peasants who were suffering from the drought, the Communist Party raised the slogan 'Let the millionaires pay', and proposed as a solution the imposition of a property levy. Of course the bureaucracy, being 'propertyless—in form' would not have to pay anything. The Communist Party tried to overlook the fact that the portion of the national income of Czechoslovakia in the hands of the bourgeoisie was so small, only a quarter of industry being left in their hands, that the only possibility of seriously improving the conditions of the masses was by 1. cutting into the income of the bureaucracy; 2. raising the general national income; 3. preventing Russia from taking her cut from the national income.

The Communist Party claimed that there were 35,000 millionaires in Czechoslovakia. This is a large number, but it is much less impressive when it is realised that they were not pound sterling or dollar millionaires, but crown millionaires. A million crowns in July, 1947, was equal to five thousand pounds sterling. Even according to the Communist Party estimate the wealth of these 35,000 'millionaires' was only 50 milliard (According to the bourgeois paper *Svobodné Slovo* there were only 12,000 millionaires with a property of 22 milliard crowns). 50 milliard crowns is only about a quarter of the annual national income of Czechoslovakia.

The conditions of the masses could not therefore be substantially improved at the expense of the bourgeoisie, but only by improvements in the nationalised sectors of the economy and at the expense of the bureaucracy. This is proved by the distribution of the national income:

PERSONAL INCOME AT FACTOR COST (THOUSAND MILLION OF CROWNS.) 1947

1. Entrepreneurial profits in industry, trade and professions and private income from capital	22.0
2. Rentals and sub-rentals (including net rental value of owner-occupied dwellings	5.2
3. Independent agriculturists	25.4
4. Wage: and salaries	125.9
5. Pensions of Government employees	5.7
6. Unfreezing of blocked accounts to people of limited means	6.3

In addition there were a number of other small items.

(Statistical Office of the United Nations, *National Income Statistics of Various Countries, 1938-1948*, Lake Success, New York, 1950, p. 59).

The figures speak for themselves. The possibility of increasing item 4 at the expense of item 1 is very limited indeed.

following terms: 'Here, as in Moscow during the war, I am 511
shocked that leaders who boast so much of the dictatorship of 565
the proletariat should enjoy privileges that are relatively far 434
greater than those enjoyed by any privileged class in Britain
or in most of the other countries condemned by Moscow as
Fascist and imperialist'. (*News Chronicle*, 26th April, 1949).

The situation was described sixteen months later by the
correspondent of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in the following
terms: 'The social revolution in the eastern countries, which
pretended to have the abolition of exploitation and inequality
as its aim, leads in actuality to the erection of a *hierarchically
ranked social order* with a whole number of privileged layers.
This can be observed daily in Yugoslavia in the same way as
in the Cominform countries and one will always be astonished
at the way in which the bearers of the system take the privileges
they enjoy for granted. The proletarians who stand in the
queues near the bus stops look with greedy eyes at the lit-up
American cars of the state leaders, resplendent in chrome and
coloured varnish, which pass swiftly by them. The higher-ups
of the State and Party travel in the latest model cabriolets, the
great ones of second rank travel in limousines. Skoda and
Opeldienst cars are at the disposal of high officers and officials.

'In the entrance to the People's Front Street in Marshal
Tito Boulevard stands a big warehouse. Men in khaki or white
uniforms with gold epaulettes go in and out. The *warehouse* is
reserved for *officers* and their families. There they can buy
clothes, shoes, furniture, carpets and other goods of better
quality and cheaper price than the common mortal can buy.
The officers get their food rations there too—far larger rations
than those of workers and clerks. So large are these rations,
that in the spring, at the time of the great food scarcity,
peasants came to town in order to buy from the officers their
surplus fat and flour at black market prices.

'It is obvious that the police and high officials also have their
own store. The *warehouse of the political police* is even better
supplied than that of the officers. Naturally these categories of
the population also have their special rations. It is the same
here as in the other Eastern countries: one who has a higher
post and a higher salary also gets larger food rations and is less
directed to the expensive free market than the poorly-salaried

- 511 small man. Reductions in prices for the higher-paid instead of
 ● 565 for those with smaller means . . . ' (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 30th
 434 August, 1950)*

465 One aspect of the problem of the mode of distribution of the
 565 social product is this: to what extent is the differentiation between
 434 different income groups concomitant with national differences? How much of the cream of the milk produced in the satellites is in the form of higher personal incomes for Soviet officials? These facts are unfortunately covered by a veil of secrecy. Some facts, however, have emerged. A letter of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (dated 13th April, 1948) stated: 'The wages of the Soviet experts (working as advisers in Yugoslavia—Y.G.) were four times as high as the wages of the commanders of our armies and three times as high as the wages of our Federal Ministers. The commander of one of our armies, a lieutenant-general or a colonel-general, then had 9,000 to 11,000 dinars a month, and a Soviet military expert, lieutenant-colonel, colonel and general had from 30,000 to 40,000 dinars. At the same time our Federal Ministers had a salary of 12,000 dinars a month.' The reply of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (dated 4th May, 1948) did not deny the correctness of these figures, but claimed as an extenuating circumstance the fact that the Yugoslav generals also got 'apartments, servants, food, etc.'

The paper *Glas*, the organ of the People's Front of Serbia, in its issue of 16th December, 1949, gave another example of the same thing. Near Sofia an automobile factory employing Russian, Czech and Bulgarian specialists was being built. The salary of the Russian specialists was 2,000 levas an hour, of the Czechs 2,000-3,000 levas a day, and of the Bulgarian 250-300 levas a day. These differences were certainly not due mainly to differences in skill.

*Since then a big change has taken place. On 14th October, 1950, Marshal Tito signed a decree abolishing special privileges in the supply and distribution of rations and consumer goods, doing away with the special shops of the upper bureaucracy, and transferring all villas and rest homes hitherto reserved for the privileged to the tourist industry. Whether this is a temporary measure resulting from the terrible drought and famine of the 1950-51 winter, it is too early to say.

CHAPTER V

LIQUIDATION OF THE PEASANT PARTIES



665 A VERY SEVERE and prolonged struggle took place between the Communist Parties and the Peasant Parties. The latter were neither as black as the Communist leaders painted them, nor as white as the majority of the western capitalist press tried to represent them. The peasant parties were of very diverse character and each of them was far from being homogeneous. Progressive and reactionary, democratic and totalitarian elements were mingled in the same parties. To follow the Communist Party policy towards them it is necessary first to understand the complex character of the peasant parties.

665 Since the economic, cultural and political leadership of a
● 665 country rests with the towns, and since the peasants of Eastern
471 Europe were dispersed in small, isolated villages, the leadership of the peasant parties mainly came from the towns. The urban population was divided into conflicting social and political groups, and so the question always arose of which class the peasantry would make its ally—the urban bourgeoisie or the workers' parties. The peasantry is divided amongst itself, the rich peasants naturally looking to one camp, and the poor, semi-proletarian majority, to the other. A whole series of socio-political problems is bound up with this. So long as the big estates were not divided up, the peasantry as a whole remained united in the fight for land reform, and their party had a more or less revolutionary character. But with the carrying out of large-scale land reforms after World War I in Rumania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria (see pages 13-8), there was very little to hold the peasantry together and no common political platform. Another factor must be taken into account. For centuries, the peasants in many countries, as for instance in France at the time of the Great Revolution, wanted to get rid of

LIQUIDATION OF THE PEASANT PARTIES

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their feudal overlords, take possession of their lands and thus gain the freedom to produce for themselves and sell their products in the towns. Such a programme would have been quite inadequate for the East European countries in the period between the two wars, because of the catastrophic fall in agricultural prices as a result of the world crisis and of the great agricultural over-population. The solution of the problems of the peasantry today is not in land distribution alone, but also in industrialisation which will absorb the surplus agricultural population and open up wide markets for agricultural products. There is a contradiction, at least temporarily, between these two factors and different layers of the peasantry have different attitudes towards industrialisation as well as towards the policy of keeping agricultural prices high (by tariffs). 665 565 471

The poor peasants who need to work at least partly for wages and do not produce enough food even for their own needs, have an interest in industrialisation and low prices for agricultural goods, while the rich peasants who want cheap labour do not care about industrialisation and support any policy which results in a rise in the cost of food. Large scale industrialisation is impossible under present conditions in Eastern Europe without State planning, so that the poor peasant naturally tends to support the socialist forces of the towns while the rich peasant looks in quite a different direction for leadership. After the land reform and in face of widespread unemployment, open and hidden, the rich peasants could not propose any positive programme to rally the mass of the peasantry to their side. Another factor contributed to the bankruptcy of the Peasant Parties of Eastern Europe. While on the whole they favoured democracy, the market for the agricultural products of Eastern Europe in the thirties was mainly fascist Germany. Hence the attitude of many of the leaders of the peasant parties to the pro-German policy of their governments was ambiguous, to say the least. To add to the contradictions in which many of the peasant parties found themselves, was the national question which the conservatism and narrow outlook of the peasantry, especially of its rich and well-satisfied section, precluded them from tackling. In Yugoslavia, Rumania and Czechoslovakia this factor was of the utmost importance in leading the official peasant parties into a blind

665 alley. If any of the peasant parties succeeded at all in escaping
 ● 565 control by the wealthy townsmen or by the rich peasants,
 471 capitulation to their semi-fascist government, entanglement
 in a hopeless and reactionary fight against other nations, as
 the peasant parties of Poland and Bulgaria did to a
 large extent, and the terrorism of the government rendered
 them powerless. Unlike the workers' parties, the peasant parties
 were loose organisations of widely scattered individuals with
 the control of the organisation concentrated in a few hands
 (in the towns) and so they were an easy target for the police.

665 Some facts about the peasant parties in East Europe before
 the end of World War II will illustrate these generalisations.

The Rumanian National Peasant Party came into being in
 1926 by the fusion of the chauvinist, anti-Hungarian National
 Party of Transylvania led by Maniu, and the Peasant Party of
 the Old Kingdom of Rumania led by Ion Mihalache. The
 Party was led entirely by lawyers, journalists, etc., and a small
 group of rich peasants. For years it was sharply opposed to
 the dictatorial King, and there were frequent and bloody
 clashes with the fascist organisations and the police. But a
 party under the leadership of rich peasants and their urban
 allies in a country where eighty per cent of the population was
 poverty-stricken could never consistently pursue a democratic
 policy. During his short periods of office between the two world
 wars, Maniu ruthlessly suppressed the strikes of the miners and
 railway workers in 1929 and 1933. Although he had been for
 years one of the leaders of the democratic opposition to King
 Carol and his agents, yet at a time when there were armed
 conflicts between the peasant members of his own party and
 the Iron Guard fascists, Maniu suddenly in 1937 declared an
 election pact with the Iron Guard, simply as a tactical
 manoeuvre against his old opponent Tătărescu and after the
 assassination of the Iron Guard leader, Codreanu, by the King,
 Maniu offered a refuge in his party to the Iron Guardists.
 The Peasant Party behaved with extreme brutality towards the
 Hungarian minority in Transylvania. During the 1930's when
 democracy in Rumania was reduced to a sham and when the
 dictatorship became increasingly open and brutal and
 millions were looking to Maniu for a call to rebel, he went no
 further than to writing some articles of protest in the press.

total number of foreign workers in Germany, including 167 prisoners of war and foreign civilian workers officially recognized as foreigners, but excluding workers from Alsace-Lorraine and Sudetenland, exceeded six million in 1943. In 1944 the high mark of eight million was reached (of whom nearly 2 million were p.o.w.'s—Y.G.) (p. 264). He adds: 'Altogether, it can be estimated that the displacement of 30 million or more people during Hitler's rule over Europe has resulted in the permanent shifting of 2-3 million. The final redistribution of Europe's population was due to Germany's defeat, which opened the way for a new and in this case permanent migration of another twenty-five million*, probably the greatest in European history' (p. 305). 563 661

Considerations of space make it necessary to choose between alternative methods of describing the character of the expulsions, either by relating more or less in detail the fate of the Germans in one of the East European countries, or briefly surveying the fate of the Germans in them all. The former method is preferable, and the treatment of the Germans in Czechoslovakia will be taken as the example.

The Sudeten Germans

The Sudeten Germans were not new inhabitants of Sudetenland. They came there about 700 years ago, when Spain was still in the hands of the Arabs, and some centuries before America was discovered. They were as numerous as the populations of some of Europe's small states. The 1930 census put their number at 3.2 million, as compared with Norway's 2.8 million, Finland's 3.6 million, Denmark's 3.7 million and Switzerland's 4.1 million. 162

The social structure of the Sudeten German community was not very different from that of the Czechs or Slovaks except that the percentage of workers was higher (a little higher than among the Czechs, and much higher than among the Slovaks). According to the 1930 census, the national communities comprised different social groups in the following proportions:— 565 ●

*In this is included some millions of non-Germans: Poles who had migrated from the area annexed by Russia (about 4 million) to the Western territories taken from Germany, Czechs and Slovaks who migrated to Sudetenland, displaced persons who returned to their countries, Jewish refugees who migrated to Palestine and other countries, etc.

STALIN'S SATELLITES IN EUROPE

	German (%)	Czechs and Slovaks (%)
Independent	21.89	25.81
Tenants	0.40	0.28
Officials and clerks ..	16.60	18.24
Workers	61.11	55.67

467 In 1930 there were 476 thousand Sudeten Germans organised in trade unions. The Executive Committee of the Sudeten German Social Democratic Party stated: 'In their worst plight, on the eve of the Munich decision, our Trade Unions could still compare their strength with those of Switzerland, a country with four million inhabitants and with a functioning democracy.' (Introduction to W. Jaksch, *Sudeten Labour and the Sudeten Problem*, London, 1945).

665 The Sudeten Germans had a long socialist tradition, for Sudetenland was one of the first and strongest socialist centres in the Austro-Hungarian empire. It produced a number of the most prominent leaders of the Socialist International, among them Karl Kautsky, Viktor Adler, Otto Bauer and Karl Renner. As early as 1907, in the general elections, the Social Democratic Party polled 39.4 per cent of the votes in German Bohemia. In the general elections of 1911, it polled more than 40 per cent. In the elections of 1920 it polled 44 per cent of the Sudeten votes. Together with the Communist Party,* for more than a decade it had about half the votes in Sudetenland, which is a much higher proportion than the Social Democrats and Communists could claim among the Czechs, let alone among the Slovaks.

563 The world economic crisis which began in 1929 changed the situation. The industry of Sudetenland, depending as it did
464 mainly on exports, was affected much more severely by the crisis than industry in the rest of the country. The bourgeois government of Czechoslovakia discriminated against German workers when giving employment, and this aggravated an already grave situation. The result was that 'unemployment in the Sudeten districts was at least twice as high as in the Czech interior.' (Jaksch, *ibid.* p. 17).

464 The great suffering caused by unemployment in Sudeten-
668 land and the existence of full employment just over the border

*An exact calculation of the strength of the Communist Party among the Sudetens is impossible, as the Party was not divided into different national groups.

665 Czechs and the Slovaks, but also neighboring peoples, par-
829 ticularly the Yugoslavs. A large proportion of the Croatian, Serbian, and Slovene politicians from the Yugoslav provinces that had formerly formed a part of Austria-Hungary were educated before the First World War in the school of Masaryk's liberal thought. Among these men was Stjepan Radić, who later was to become leader of the Croatian Peasant Party.

829 Liberalism in Eastern Europe, and this is true for other
● 565 countries as well, cannot be identified only with the so-called middle classes or with supporters of the free enterprise system. The middle classes, with the exception of those in Czechoslovakia and Austria, were not numerically or economically strong or influential. The capitalistic economic order was strongly defended, not only by the liberals, but by pronounced conservatives among whom were those who began to support authoritarian regimes in the 'thirties. The peasants, insofar as they did not adhere politically to parties of the conservative right, were usually very devoted and often even radical supporters of democracy. Similarly, a great number of socialistically oriented workers and intelligentsia, in supporting political democracy, were influenced by ideas of liberalism. Many liberals, usually those belonging to the intelligentsia, were sympathetic to socialistic tendencies. This socialistically-minded liberalism, which had its counterpart in France among the Radical Socialists or the so-called "Independent" Socialists, and in Britain among the British Fabians, was best represented in Czechoslovakia by T. G. Masaryk and his disciple, Eduard Beneš. Both men, although they rejected Marxism, accepted many ideas of the socialistic school of thought. This liberal socialistic orientation was the basis of the Czechoslovakian party of National Socialists whose adherents were chiefly recruited from the small bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, and the workers. The National Socialists endeavored to combine liberal-

ism with socialism, in the belief that political democracy should be accompanied by "economic democracy."

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The importance and influence of liberalism in this region did not, therefore, rest with any particular political parties or social groupings which gave themselves the liberal label or which explicitly professed liberal principles. The influence of liberalism lay in the force of the liberal ideology which exercised influence on the whole national community.

It is often held today, due to the conception of liberalism held in Anglo-Saxon countries and, to some extent, in other countries of Western Europe, that the influence of liberalism in the Eastern European countries was not of great importance. This is accounted for by a theory that the so-called middle classes were weak and that the popular masses, predominantly peasant, had a low social and cultural standing. Czechoslovakia is cited as an example to support this analysis. It is said that Czechoslovakia was able to maintain her democracy because she had an influential and prosperous middle class and because the cultural level of her population was approximately the same as the cultural level of the West. There is no doubt that a weak middle class and a low social standard among the popular masses were serious handicaps to the development of liberal democracy in the agricultural countries of this region. Liberal democracy required, from the social and economic points of view, not uniformity and equalization, but a diversified and well-balanced social structure and an economy with a fair degree of balance between industry and agriculture. Above all, liberal democracy required the "liberal spirit," a combination of a desire for freedom, a devotion to political and social rights, and an eagerness for justice. The existence of liberal democracy, therefore, cannot be defined in terms of social and economic requirements alone.

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In support of this premise, several examples can be cited. Before the First World War, in the small Serbia of King

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"PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY" IN THEORY AND PRACTICE 85

cate the workers to respect the rule of socialist communal life." The Polish and Rumanian constitutions of 1952 provide that "The courts defend the system of People's Democracy and the gains of the working people, and ensure the people's law, social property and citizens' rights." 692 641

In practice it is always the duty of the judge and the prosecutor to take the side of the Communist State—that is, of the Communist Party. It is always the duty of the defense to help the state prosecute the accused and to help him to accuse himself. The defendant's duty is to prove his guilt. The courts are a tool of the Communist regimes and are not independent institutions for the administration of justice. Communism introduces not only the judicial murder of innocent people but a debasement of man unparalleled in the history of mankind. The innocent defendant is forced to accuse himself of crimes which he has never committed, to accuse other innocent people, to trample upon his own dignity, to humiliate himself in the eyes of his friends and family, to spit upon the ideals in which he has believed, and to praise the loathsome practices of his enemy and prosecutor as he awaits death by the hands of his oppressor or by slow agony in a prison or forced labor camp. 692 661

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Although it proclaims the liberation of the masses, the communist system has created unprecedented privilege for the ruling Communist elite. Everyone who has seen the living conditions of the highest Communist dignitaries in Russia as well as in the captive countries knows that these men enjoy a very high standard of living. They have privileges in all spheres of life—political, economic, social, and cultural. The life of the Communist elite is, however, not to be envied. Generally, the members of this group are hated. They are constantly threatened, even by the members of 641 565 ●

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- 641 their own party. They live a life of fear in a golden cage,
● 565 from which they cannot withdraw, even if they wish to do so.

In a democratic state a president elected to office lives like any free and private citizen. Under the Communist system this is unthinkable. The system of privileges finds support even in Communist theory. "It is time, it was understood that Marxism is an enemy of equalization," Stalin stated in his report to the Seventeenth Communist Congress in January of 1934. "By equality Marxism means, not equalization of individual requirements and individual life, but abolition of classes. . . ." In the same connection he quoted Lenin's statement that "the claim that we want to make all men equal to one another is an empty phrase and a stupid invention of intellectuals." *

641 Freedom of religion and of faith under the Communist system does not exist, either in theory or in practice. The first articles of Communist constitutions always proclaim many civil liberties. But, when we analyze more closely the following passages of these articles, we see that as a rule they contradict and abolish the provisions contained in the first lines. Let us take for example, Article 70 of the constitution of the Polish People's Republic, which appears to guarantee the citizens freedom of conscience and of faith. It also says, however, that abuse of freedom of faith for purposes detrimental to the interest of the Polish People's Republic is punishable. In practice, of course, this means that every pronouncement against the atheistic and materialistic principles of the Communist system is detrimental to the People's Republic and is therefore punishable.

641 But that is not all. The Communists who proclaim the
793 division between the church and the state do not intend to leave any freedom to the church. They demand the clergy's help in the building of socialism and consider any refusal to be detrimental to the interests of the People's State. In

* Joseph Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, pp. 521-522.

"PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY" IN THEORY AND PRACTICE 37

practice, church organizations and the clergy are meant to have no function but that of a helpful tool in the communization of the nation. 641 793

The function of education is the same. The Communists do not even pretend to support freedom of knowledge and bluntly state in their legislation that the duty of higher schools is to educate the younger generation in the spirit of socialist dialectics and materialistic doctrines. Theoretically, the Communist system assures the youth of education. In practice, an individual's right to education is not determined by intellectual ability and progress but by membership in the Young Communist League (Komsomol), by informing on "unorthodox" professors, and by success in examinations on Communist politics and doctrines. 641 871

The articles of the Communist constitutions that deal with the rights of the citizens stress above all the rights to work, rest, and medical treatment. The Communist attitude toward the individual is like that of the horse-owner when he thinks that the main duty of his animal is to work and believes that it must be assured of rest and medical treatment only to insure the fulfillment of this duty. Actually, most farmers in the free countries treat their animals better than the Communists treat the people. Out of hatred, the Communists destroy whole social groups and even perpetrate the genocide of whole nations. 641

The Communists claimed that when they had freed the working man from capitalist exploitation they would not allow the exploitation of one man by another. Is this claim realized in practice? Again, the answer is no. The Communist state created the worst kind of exploitation by giving the rule of the people to the Communist elite and by providing this elite with the formidable weapons of both police and army. In a democratic state, even where large industries and sources of raw materials are nationalized, the interests of the people are guarded by trade unions, politi- 661 565

661 cal parties, legislation, courts, and the police who protect
 565 the security of the citizens. The state authority is the mediator
 in the last resort in disagreements between labor and busi-
 ness.

661 The Moloch, which is the Communist state, has on its
 466 side the party, the police, and the courts. Special laws con-
 641 stantly increase the penalties for the plunder and destruc-
 tion of the nationalized public property. Because the state
 is a "people's state" and "does not do injustice to the people,"
 the trade unions act as a tool of the state in raising the
 productivity and quality of production and fixing the norms
 of work. The Stakhanovite work system, based on high
 norms of production and granting starvation-level wages
 with no means of protection against these, destroys the
 strength and health of the worker. Strikes are punishable be-
 cause they are crimes against the interests of the state, and
 special laws provide discipline of work, penalties for failure
 to fulfill norms, and forced labor camps for "idlers" and
 "loafers."

661 Communism deprives the peasant of his beloved land,
 641 turns him into a Communist serf, and chains him to the
 423 state or collective farm in which the Communist bureaucracy
 demands of him ever-increasing physical efforts to produce
 for the insatiable state. After the liquidation of the rem-
 nants of private initiative in small business and crafts, the
kulak peasant, the biggest "capitalist blood-sucker," is dealt
 with. He is destroyed by tax levies and forced deliveries of
 agricultural products and is finally evicted from his own
 farm.

642 Thus, behind the façade of People's Democracy, Com-
 munism practices dictatorship in every sphere of life—per-
 sonal, political, economic, religious, and social. The Com-
 munist system creates privileges for the party and makes
 the citizen economically dependent upon the state. It de-
 bases human dignity, wrests faith out of human hearts, kills

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474 government-dictated constitution. Cooperative members, in-
423 stead of being the masters of their cooperatives, are their servants. They have to perform tasks which have been fixed without their knowledge or consent. In higher type Communist cooperatives, the members assume the status of landless laborers.

If the complete dependency of the cooperatives on the State Tractor and Machine Stations and on the Communist Party is taken into consideration, it is clear that production cooperatives are no more than state enterprises under the disguise of cooperatives. There is only one difference between a state farm and a production cooperative: the members of a cooperative have to bear all production risks. It is true that *de jure* they remain owners of their land, but *de facto* they cease to be owners as they cannot be sure of getting their fields back when they leave the cooperative. According to the constitution of these cooperatives, a member must accept other fields, if return of his own fields would disrupt the cooperative.

474 The Communists declare they prefer that peasants join
661 cooperatives voluntarily. However, they are not above per-
565 suading private farmers to join by such methods as higher taxes and higher delivery quotas, less fertilizers and other production means at higher prices, and charges for all services higher than those paid by cooperative members. At the same time, they give private farmers no credit, no field hands, and no opportunity to use agricultural machines, while collectives enjoy almost unlimited credit and other facilities. Members of production cooperatives are rewarded by the government with free vacations in the best hotels at winter resorts and with free group travel to the Soviet Union; they are a privileged class in every respect.

In contrast, well-to-do peasants who used hired labor in free times are denounced as being "village rich," a term which is used in Eastern Europe to describe the equivalent of the

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Russian *kulak*. The village rich are not allowed to enter a collective or are expelled if they become members. A merciless battle is being waged to ruin them. They are being liquidated as peasants, removed from villages, and sent to mines or to industry or concentration camps. There are roughly thirteen million peasant families in Eastern Europe, more than one million of which are *kulaks*. The children of all these families must lose the individualistic traits of their peasant heritage: that is the Communist aim. 474 661 565 ●

Large-scale industrialization plans, for military purposes rather than for consumer production, are being pushed forward with great vigor in all Eastern European states and new labor is required in great numbers. *Kulaks* and other class enemies are an obvious source for this labor. By tapping this source, the surplus agricultural population will be disposed of and the people with individualist outlook gradually destroyed. If there is a shortage of workers in agriculture, as for instance in Czechoslovakia now, industrial workers already persuaded to the collective way of thinking can be utilized. 433

The term *kulak* has come to mean anyone who is against collectivization, and all *kulaks* are to be destroyed. The process of destruction is quickly changing the status of the agrarian population in this region. The agricultural population is decreasing and, according to estimate, does not amount today to more than 45 per cent of the total population. This decrease is the political consequence of collectivization and not its economic or social result. The collectivization policy itself cannot solve the old problem of rural overpopulation but can only aggravate it. The real aim of Communist collectivization is not to solve this problem but rather to destroy the peasantry. 661

Agriculture, like the other divisions of economic life, has been dictated by state plans which prescribe to the peasant what crops are to be grown and what animals are to be bred. 241 185

178 voked political and social movements, such as had never been known in the West, and which expressed the distinctive socioeconomic programs and political and social philosophies of the area.

- 565 Before any analysis of these peasant movements can be undertaken, it will be necessary to examine their human element, the peasantry. There are three points, which are of most significance to this discussion: first, what is a peasantry; second, what are the differences between a peasantry and the rural population of the West, usually known as farmers; and third, what are the special characteristics of the Eastern European peasantry which have justified and made possible its separate political organization.

565 829 Despite the fact that the peasantry still represents a considerable majority of the world's population, a uniform definition for it cannot be found. The reason for this is the different approach of various social and economic schools to the peasant problem. While the Marxists consider the peasantry from a purely economic point of view, evaluating this group only in the system of socialist production, liberals believe that there are aspects to the peasantry besides the economic which should be considered. The liberals point out the importance of the peasant's relationship to his land and the influence of his environment upon him. They realize that there are two elements, the sociological and the cultural, which are of great and equal significance in appraising the peasant society. The sociological element includes the individual's family life, the customs, traits, and trends of neighborhood and village communities, and the peasant's attachment to religious and other traditions. These traditions are upheld by a special type of "progressive conservatism." The cultural element includes all such features as folk songs, folk customs and habits, and so forth, which have developed independent of the cosmopolitan civilization.

In view of the foregoing, the peasantry may be defined

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tentatively as a group settled on a determined territory, having its principal source of livelihood in a cultivation of the soil that is based on the system of the small farm, and possessing its own way of life and its own indigenous culture. 565
829
[81]

This definition will help us answer our second question; namely, what are the differences between the peasants and the farmers. For a long time the rural sociologists of the West made no distinction between these two groups, and it is only recently that adequate attention has been given to this problem. Today it is generally recognized that between these two rural societies there exist essential dissimilarities which result from a permanent infiltration by the cosmopolitan civilization into the rural orbit. This process has been far more intense in the European and American rural groups, the farmers, than in the genuine peasant population. 565
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With this distinction in mind, the farmers and the genuine peasantry may be contrasted. Economically speaking, the farmers produce primarily for the market, abiding by the established norms of offer and demand. Although they are attached to the land, they consider it almost impersonally and from an economic point of view. Therefore, they are willing to move from one area to another when there are economic reasons. The peasants, on the other hand, produce primarily for home consumption. Because their land is a part of their heritage, they consider it personally, as a part of their life and of their family tradition.

Socially, life in the rural communities of the West has become increasingly urbanized. The peasant society of Eastern Europe has been infiltrated by urban ideas to a far lesser degree and has preserved, generally speaking, many of its original aspects.

Culturally, the indigenous traditions of the farmer population, if not completely vanished, are disappearing rapidly. In the genuine peasant society, cultural traits are still clearly

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565 visible and constitute an outstanding characteristic of this
182 group.

The third point in this discussion of the peasantry concerns the special characteristics of the Eastern European peasantry which have enabled it to maintain a separate political organization. It can be said safely that nowhere in Europe have the characteristics peculiar to peasant society been so well preserved as in this region. Although numerical supremacy has been a factor in the preservation of peasant society, more important is the fact that the peasants of Eastern Europe have manifested in recent history a tremendous self-consciousness, political maturity, and determined will to create political and social organizations of their own, which, so far, have not been emulated by the peasantry in other parts of the globe. The peasantry of Western European countries, such as Spain, Portugal, or Italy, often comprises over 50 per cent of the rural population. However, this Western peasantry has never been able to generate powerful and influential peasant political organizations; nor has it been able to play an outstanding role in national life as has the peasantry of Eastern Europe.

II

566 The greater part of the peasantry in Eastern Europe was liberated from the bondages of serfdom in the year of revolutions, 1848. In that part of Poland which was included in the Russian Empire, the abolition of serfdom was proclaimed in 1861, and in Old Rumania, in 1864. The peasants of the Balkans, subjected to a special type of land tenure relations and vassalage as practiced in the Ottoman empire, were freed gradually with the withdrawal of the Turkish political power, especially after the arrangements made at the Congress of Berlin in 1878.

000 The liberation of the peasantry was a consequence of

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The liberation of the peasantry was a consequence of
the demands of the new liberal movement and was one of the achievements of the liberal regimes which gained momentum on the Continent after the Napoleonic era. This European liberalism had been a result of the struggle of the bourgeoisie against the old political and economic order upheld previously by the aristocracy. It originated in the theory of natural rights, as interpreted by French political philosophers of the eighteenth century, and included in its doctrine the postulate of political, economic, and social freedom and equality for all individuals. 668
641
565 ●

However, it would be wrong to assume that the formal liberation of the peasantry was an immediate result of its emulation of other classes of society, in particular, of the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, the struggle for the realization of peasant rights had still to be fought.

The ruling regimes imposed political restrictions that were usually based on the tax census system and barred large masses of the peasant population from their right to vote in parliamentary elections. In many of the countries, it was not until the end of the First World War that complete franchise was granted to the peasantry. 641
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Economic freedom, as advocated and practiced by liberalism, soon began to undermine the foundations of the peasant economy. The peasantry, which under feudalism had paid most of its rents and other fees to the landlord in natural produce, was placed suddenly in the midst of a complicated money-economy in which the autarkic arrangements of the peasant familistic economy were no longer valid. Peasant land, which throughout centuries had changed little in price or in value, was suddenly submitted to wide fluctuations in value as a consequence of the rapid development of the communication system and the erection of industrial plants. The appearance of a money-economy created the necessity of establishing an appropriate credit system which heretofore had been lacking completely in the peasant orbit. The state,

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- 641 however, following its policy of economic freedom, did not
 ● 565 deem it necessary to intervene in this problem, and left the
 178 peasants open to the merciless exploitation of private banks
 and usurers. Economic individualism, accentuated by liberal-
 ism, induced individual members of the large peasant family
 groups, known among the Southern Slavs as *zadrugas*, to seek
 their economic independence. This process provoked a hasty
 and uncontrolled parcellation of the peasant land and con-
 tributed further to the economic weakness and inefficiency of
 the peasant system of farming.

The solemnly proclaimed social equality of the peasant was a farce. The ruling groups, derived from the bourgeoisie, the newly created bureaucracy, and the remnants of the aristocratic elements, looked upon the peasants with contempt and mistrust, considering them, although necessary to agrarian production, neither fitted nor qualified to take part in politics or public affairs. Social inequality was expressed both by the attitude of dominant ethnical groups to the "peoples of lower categories" and by the division within these groups between intelligentsia and the common people, or peasants.

Obviously, remedies were sought to correct the adverse conditions created in the liberal era, but before these are discussed, it is necessary to credit liberalism for those ideas and measures which, in principle, were universally accepted by the masses and which made possible their political organization. Generally speaking, the ideas of political freedom and of general education and a belief in the individual's capabilities were the stimulating forces behind the organization of the people. However, these ideas did not save liberalism, but prepared the road for its destruction.

- 829 The first reaction to the flaws in liberalism was the appearance of the "scientific socialism" of Karl Marx. It is important to note that this philosophy was conceived exclusively for the newly created industrial proletariat. The peasants, if

considered at all, were reviewed and evaluated only from the point of view of production with no attention paid to the human side of their problems. Moreover, the contempt of Marx for the peasantry is well known. He called them a "class of barbarians," and proclaimed his desire to save humanity from the "idiocy of rural life." 829

The reaction to scientific socialism and a simultaneous opposition to liberalism brought about the birth of Christian democracy which attempted to formulate a middle-road policy between the economic freedom of liberalism and the socialist doctrine of the total negation of the absolute truth, of private property, and of human dignity. Being primarily a reaction to the liberal-socialist dispute on capital-labor relations, this new doctrine was concerned very little, if at all, with the peasant problem which "remained the stepchild of public opinion and of the social policy."

The first attempt to use the contemporary social and economic ideas for the organization of the peasant masses was partly accountable for the appearance of Populism in Russia in the 1870's. More specifically, Populism was an endeavor to create an ideal agrarian peasant community by applying the theories of scientific socialism. This very fact converted the effort into a unique social and economic movement sharply in conflict with the orthodox Marxism. It became clear very soon to the promoters of Populism that the formulas conceived by Marx were inefficient in a rural society and that diversified methods must be sought if the needs and hopes of the peasants were to be satisfied. This new movement, although peasant, was of revolutionary character, not only demanding the land for the peasants but also advocating its collective ownership under a particular form of Russian organization known as the *mir*. It pointed out that the essence of the Populist program must be the institutions and desires inherent in the people and that it must not represent scientific formulas imported from abroad. 668 565

829 Although Populism exerted some influence on the establishment of the Rumanian peasant movement, it had very little influence upon the other peasant movements in Eastern Europe. At the time when Populism was already an organized political force in Russia, the peasantry in Eastern Europe was still politically inactive. When the peasant mobilization began, more than two decades later, it was influenced little, if at all, by the Populist ideas.

668 The main reason for the relatively late organization of the
 565 peasantry in Eastern Europe was the presence of political
 423 and economic conditions essentially different from those prevailing in Tsarist Russia. Whereas regular political life was unknown in Russia, European liberalism favored the formation of political parties which would try to win the sympathies of the peasants by promising them the realization of their desires. Collective ownership of land was not a common institution in Eastern Europe. However, the prediction of Marx relating to the accumulation of capital and further expansion of large estates proved to be incorrect. On the contrary, many large land holdings, unable to accommodate themselves to modern capitalist management, commenced to disintegrate. The land was usually bought, in spite of heavy material sacrifices, by land-hungry neighboring peasants, and thus many new independent peasant holdings were created, which contributed considerably to the strengthening of the peasantry.

Hence, the establishment of a revolutionary peasant movement was checked by existing political conditions: the traditions of the Eastern European peasantry were opposed to collective forms of land ownership and to the socialist tenets of Populism. However, none of the existing political groups was fit to meet the increased desire of the peasantry for an organized action of their own, and, at the turn of the century, on an independent basis and in opposition to the contemporary political and social groups, peasant organization began.

The common source of the peasant movements resided in the political, social, and economic evils of the liberal regimes, but immediate motives varied slightly in the different countries. In some countries, the emphasis on the necessity for peasant organization was a reaction to the adverse economic conditions to which the peasantry was exposed. In other countries, this move was a political and economic reaction to political and national oppression, economic exploitation, and the contempt of the ruling ethnical groups for the peasantry of subordinated nations. Finally, the Croatian peasants had special motives. Their peasant movement was organized chiefly to struggle for the social and political equality of the peasants against the dominating bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy. The latter, although it represented an insignificant minority in the nation, had monopolized Croatian political life.

The first to outline the philosophical principles of a peasant movement was Ante Radić in Croatia. Influenced by French Romantic philosophers, especially Michelet, Radić published, in 1896, his work, *Osnova*, in which he set forth his concept of the people (in peasant countries this meant the peasantry), and indicated their significance in the political and economic life of the nation.

The first coherent peasant organizations were those of the Bulgarians and the Czechs who both founded their first peasant political organizations in 1896. They were followed shortly by the Croatians in 1904, and by the Serbians and the Poles in 1905. The first steps for a peasant movement in Rumania were initiated in 1907, while in Hungary the appearance of a genuine peasant movement was retarded by political and socio-economic conditions until 1908. In the Baltic States, true political life started only with the independence gained after the First World War. Subsequently, powerful peasant political organizations were founded in Estonia and Latvia. In Albania the initiative for a peasant political or-

- 668 ganization did not exist until the Second World War; the
 ● 565 organization itself was established after the war by exiled political leaders.

In Slovenia, Slovakia, and Lithuania, on the other hand, truly peasant political organizations have never developed fully. In these Catholic countries the peasantry was influenced from the beginning by the Catholic political thought and subsequently organized on the principles of Christian democracy.

Although the immediate motives for peasant organization in different countries were varied, its demands were everywhere identical because of its common general source—its ideological basis. The programs made the following demands for the peasants: full political rights, proportional participation in public affairs, agrarian reform and distribution of the land to the peasants, social justice, and rights for the peasants in educational facilities equal to the rights of other classes in the state.

- 829 To understand better the peasant movements and their
 668 aims, three elements of their ideological and organizational
 565 structure must be discussed: first, their ideological basis; second, the dogmatic differences between these and other contemporary political and socio-economic trends; and third, the effective points of their practical programs.

- 829 The peasant ideology, or peasantism, is the outlook of the
 665 peasantry on the complex of political and socio-economic issues in which the peasants are interested and for whose solution they are fighting. The organizational forms of peasantism, established for the purposes of current political struggle, are the various peasant political parties. Unlike scientific socialism or Christian democracy, peasantism is not the artificial creation of an individual or group of individuals; it contains only those ideas which are inherent in the peasant soul and character. Consequently, the peasant leaders do not conceive the political soul of peasantism but merely interpret

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come. Once again, Czechoslovakia headed the list with 5.5 ⁴⁶⁶ per cent while the Balkan countries devoted only 1.5 per cent ⁷⁴⁵ of their national income to social services. In the same year ¹⁸⁵ the number of persons registered as unemployed in the various countries was as follows: Czechoslovakia, 408,000; Poland, 347,000; Hungary, 47,000; Yugoslavia, 21,600; and Rumania, 10,800.

A major consequence of industrialization and urbanization was the rapid growth both of an urban proletariat and of the bureaucracy. Those people who had been separated from their ancestral rural surroundings and traditions and often from the influence of their families became increasingly detached from spiritual matters and turned more and more towards materialistic and technical spheres. The number of bureaucrats grew rapidly and this resulted in political favoritism and in desk-level programs which very seldom touched the people of the countryside. ³⁶⁹ ⁵⁶⁵

It cannot be said, however, that no progress was made or that standards of living were consistently low. It must be remembered that it was not until the First World War that many of these countries attained independence. A part of Poland had just emerged from Russian domination and certain areas of the Balkan states had just freed themselves from Ottoman rule. Even Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Croatia, and parts of Poland had been freed only recently from Austro-German political and economic controls. Under these circumstances, the progress made by these countries, notwithstanding failures and mistakes, was considerable indeed. ¹⁸⁵

III

The states that had dominated this region before the First World War—Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and the Ottoman empire—showed little interest in improving the educational standards of the large masses in Eastern Europe. ⁸⁷¹ ²¹²

87/ Illiteracy in the prewar era was extremely prevalent except in 2/2 Bohemia, Slovenia, a part of Hungary, and the formerly German-ruled section of Poland. Following the various educational reforms and the expansion of facilities during the '20's, the illiteracy rates were: 31.4 per cent (1934) for Bulgaria, 4.1 per cent (1930) for Czechoslovakia, 6.0 per cent (1941) for Hungary, 23.1 per cent (1931) for Poland, 23.1 per cent (1948) for Rumania, and 45.2 per cent (1931) for Yugoslavia. In spite of the notable progress attained within a decade and a half of liberation, the problem of achieving literacy and education for the masses remained a considerable one.

658 In the interwar period, a vast number of schools were built and many universities were founded or enlarged. National statistics show that on the average 3 per cent of the estimated national incomes was devoted to education for the region as a whole. Czechoslovakia, with 3.5 per cent, had the largest budgetary provision for education, spending in 1937 the 87/ equivalent of eighty-four million dollars. Universal compulsory elementary education was introduced widely in this area. However, the number and quality of teachers did not increase

● [565] as rapidly as did the buildings. Therefore, especially in the eastern and southern regions, semieducated or semiskilled individuals were numerous, and anyone who had been exposed to education considered himself an "intellectual." Under such circumstances, this term very often stood for mere prestige, and the "intellectuals" exerted influence out of proportion to their training. A poor system of communication, a dispersed settlement pattern, mediocre teachers and, last but not least, the rather uncooperative behavior of the peasants impeded the possibilities of an adequate education for the peasant class, which represented the majority of Eastern Europe's population.

000 Due to the prevalence of a liberalism linked with national-

262 cause of the fuel shortage, makes a bitter joke of the Communist pledge to liberate the housewife from drudgery. There
 ● [545] are a few brighter spots in this picture. The soldiers and policemen are well fed and so are the privileged classes of senior government and party workers, and of artists and writers. The numerical strength of these new, privileged strata of society is less than that of the pre-war middle class, and their standard of living is undoubtedly lower.

262 Data have been published lately that illustrate the low
 511 level of consumption of food behind the Iron Curtain. These data concern the increase of sales of certain staples in Czechoslovakia in 1952 over those in 1951, and, for once, they are disclosed not in meaningless percentages, as is the rule behind the Iron Curtain, but in absolute figures. An analysis of these figures shows the increase in sales of sugar and butter to the extent, respectively, of two ounces and less than half an ounce per capita per month. The alleged increase in sales of coffee actually lags behind the increase in the population. Only the amount of tea sold has really increased. However, the Czechoslovakians are not tea but coffee drinkers. They used to produce more sugar than they could consume before the war. Yet the text in question continues: "The above figures show that the standard of living of the Czechoslovak people is irresistibly on the upward trend." Another example is a long letter from a coal miner in Poland, whose only subject was a detailed description of how he tried in vain for weeks in the fall of 1952 to buy a piece of sausage. In his fury with the regime and "the Russkis" behind it, the humble writer rose to the rhetoric of a Patrick Henry and declared that since there was no sausage life was not worth living. "And to think that I actually used to grumble against the pre-war government!" was his final confession. It should be noted that pre-war Poland had a large surplus of pork.

656 In the summer of 1953, the Soviet government announced
 511 that it would take many measures to relieve the all too ob-

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874 both of graduates and of schools are several times larger than
185 before the war and are still increasing. The educational level is much lower than it was either before the war or in the free West, but it tallies with the Communist conception of superior education which aims at mass production of technicians specialized in one limited field and not instructed in general culture. Here again, these countries have to follow Soviet precedents, and narrow specialization is the method and the aim of education.

874 The emergence before long of thousands of newly gradu-
● 565 ated engineers, chemists, and the like, will have a profound effect on the economic and social structure of the area. These young people will be the managerial class of the future. Their lives will be dependent on the industrial trend of the economy of the captive nations. Unlike the new teachers, lawyers, writers, and other intellectuals, who will have to be agents of the Communist political machine, the new technicians will be allowed to serve both their own and national interests without being associated day in and day out with the sinister doings of the police state. Technology, like medicine, is one of the very few fields of creative activity open to non-Communists. When this is taken into consideration, it will be seen that the young men and women who besiege institutes of technology and other technical schools behind the Iron Curtain are very largely those who wish to preserve some independence of spirit. In their own domain, they will be able to dedicate themselves to creating national material wealth without paying more than lip service to the political framework in which they exist. This kind of work, where there is much less political supervision, may possibly come to be
565 considered the closest thing to individual initiative. In contrast to the 'Commissar' group of the new middle class, the new managerial stratum of these societies is, or may become, aware of the superiority of life in the free world and thus be a potential ally of the West. There seems to be, however, a

condition attached to such a speculation. Were the West to 565 • deny the principle of industrial transformation of these countries and to envisage their 'return to pastoral status,' the new managerial class together with the working class would range itself automatically against the West.

VI

The economic and social revolution which these countries 178 have undergone has been imposed on them very largely from 181 the outside. It has been successful because it was backed by the whole strength of a great military empire but also because the material and moral ravages of war and German occupation had shattered the prewar fabric of society and exposed its structural weaknesses. The society which is emerging from this revolution will be very different from the former one. Even if a true liberation of this part of Europe were to occur, the restitution of many old forms of life would not be feasible. The greatest harm that the captive nations have suffered and will suffer through the imposed revolution are the inflictions upon the souls and the minds of the people. Gradual de-Christianization, loosening of family ties, fear and distrust of political authorities and of the neighbor, Russification and falsification of national past, coarsening of manners, and the awful deposit of lies and prejudices of propaganda and non-technical schooling: all these are weapons which are levelled upon the minds and souls of the people. The undoing of these moral effects of Communist policies could only be gradual, and it would take a long time.

In the social and economic fields, the effects of Com- 178 munism have not been so uniformly somber. That goods can 433 be produced under Communism has been learned from Russian precedents. That Communism cannot assure to the people a decent standard of living is a fact that cannot be denied by any amount of propaganda, and it is also true that

178 years before the First World War in the Austro-Hungarian
563 monarchy. At the same time, there was relatively little competition for the services of men of high talent on the part of industry, applied science, or practical politics, since all of these activities remained relatively underdeveloped.

578 The coincidence of intellectual precocity with widespread
565 social and economic backwardness led to widespread experiences of frustration. Intellectuals, not unlike the ancient philosopher Plato, dreamed of equalling one day the power and prestige of the aristocracy, for which they lacked the land holdings and family connections; and they dreamed of equalling the comforts and securities of the bourgeoisie—the upper middle class—without either owning a bourgeois amount of property or devoting a bourgeois proportion of their time and attention to money-making or to business matters. They resented the influence of the church and the clergy in the rural areas, without being either willing or able to devote a major part of their own time and attention to the needs of the country population. Almost all classes of society had come to desire Western standards of income, comfort, security, and power, without possessing as yet either the means or the skill necessary to produce them. And all these discontented groups and individuals, pushed forward by the fundamental incongruities in their social evolution, turned to politics and to the state as a remedy for their frustrations.

IV

186 Under these conditions, no type of government and no
631 size of political unit could for long live up to the rising level of popular expectations and the increasingly pressing demands of society. Already, before the year 1914, large states as well as small, national states as well as international, became increasingly strained by social tensions.

In a supra- or multinational state, such as the Austro-

8: Black

● 565

El Europe

[For further information on Peasant groups and organizations see pages 109-131 in category 116.]